TRACER

McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AN ILLINOIS CORPORATION (not for profit)

6422 Main Street, Union, Illinois 60180

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REPLIES TO OUR "HELP WANTED" COLUMN IN FALL ISSUE

Early telephone offices.
Our "help wanted" column in the Fall Tracer brought a reply from Earl H. Crandall of Roselle, concerning the first Union telephone office. Since the whole letter was most interesting, we will copy it verbatim.

"I found the Newsletter very interesting. The first telephone office was in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Kremer - they had a general store, the house was connected to the store, and there were several members of the family and not too many calls. Later it was moved to the Sanford Hotel across the main street. The store was located on the west side of Main street near the Northwestern depot. Later it was a hardware store. (This is about the Union telephone office.) The article about Mr. Crabb -- He is a very good friend of mine. He interviewed Mrs. Crandall and me a dozen or more times around the time of our 70th wedding anniversary. The Courier News of Nov. 14 had a McHenry County Historical Section which showed many of the pictures and had a long article about a Mr. Harold Wayne who built a large home in Union in the 1850s. As a boy I lived within two blocks of this home-in fact I was there until I was 24 years old. I knew it as the Tom Clute home early and later a family named Goodrich had it. It was always a beautiful place and I was glad to know the present owners are keeping it up. My grandparents Henry Crandall came to Seneca Township about 1850, he built the stone part of the school in Union which is part of the Society's Museum in 1870. I attended the same school of 3 rooms and 3 teachers from 1890 to 1900."

Another response about the Union office came from Eugene Shaw, of Union. Mr. Shaw recalls that the first office was in the home of a Mrs. Richardson, who was the operator, at the northeast corner of Elm and Jefferson, about 1910. He said they had a wall telephone which you cranked to get the operator.

Mrs. George Danner of Harvard collected the following facts from the Harvard Herald's back issues concerning telephone service in that town: May 5, 1895 was the date of the initial meeting of the organization which bore the name of the Harvard Telephone Company. J.C. Blake is credited with inspiring the movement which led to its installation. The first switchboard was located in Wagar's paint and wallpaper store. Mr. Wagar, who was possessed of a mechanical mind proved valuable in looking after service installations and keeping lines functioning at normal expense. (This original location was at 43 North Ayer, present location of Motor Service Company.) The first officials were F.F. Axtell, H.D. Crumb, G.R. Wagar, J.C. Blake, and James Logue. Mr. Crumb was the first president, F.F. Axtell, first treasurer. The switchboard was first operated by boys, Ed Mayon being an early operator. They were soon replaced by young women, some of the very early ones being: Lulu Wagar, Belle Purinton, Della Shepard, Nelle Allendorf, Mary Moran and Bessie Burke. A.A. Allendorf was manager from 1901 to 1923; succeeded by Charles Nieman, who would serve until 1943. When Harvard celebrated its centennial in 1956, many Harvard businesses were still using the numbers first assigned them. 7 being the Harvard State Bank's, 11, the First State Bank's and 13 Richardson's Pharmacy.

MEMBERS' DUES AND NEW MEMBERS.

Another item in the the "Help Wanted" portion of the last Tracer concerned members paying dues. Leta Clark has contributed a membership report including 23 new members, which I am sure everyone will find interesting.

The project of bringing our membership files up to date was quite successful. We took in over $2000. which was greatly needed and appreciated since our utility bills are extremely high. Some members dropped out due to ill health, death, lack of interest and leaving the area. We were disappointed that some ignored our letters, telephone messages, and red X's on Tracer labels.

Following is the number of Tracers mailed to each community: Alden - 4; Algonquin - 11; Cary - 25; Crystal Lake - 68; Fox River Grove - 2; Harvard - 43; Hebron - 8; Huntley - 26; Marengo - 67; McHenry - 55; Richmond - 16; Ringwood - 3; Solon Mills - 2; Spring Grove - 6; Union - 29; Wonder Lake - 9; Woodstock - 181; Misc. - 56.

Since this represents "couple" and "family" as well as business and organization memberships, it's really impossible to give an accurate count of individual members. As you can see, we need to increase our membership in some areas of the county.

In response to the letters sent out by the finance committee, we are happy to report a number of new business and organization memberships.

NEW MEMBERS OF MCHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BUSINESS AND INDIVIDUALS

Brill Realty Company
14026 Marengo Road
Huntley, Ill. 60142

Crystal Lake Homemakers
Mrs. Henry O. Zoellick
7416 Chesterfield Road
Crystal Lake, Ill. 60014

Harvard Federal Savings and Loan
58 North Ayer Street
Harvard, Ill. 60033

Hebron State Bank
Hebron, Ill. 60034

Illinois Bell Telephone
134 N. Main Street
Rockford, Ill.60015

Independent Order of Odd Fellows
Guardian Lodge #60
730 Seminary
Woodstock, Ill. 60098

Midwest Well Supply Company
P.O. Box 547
Huntley, Ill. 60142

McHenry Plaindealer
3812 W. Elm Street
McHenry, Ill. 60050

Markison, Henry
719 Maple Street
Marengo, Ill. 60152

McHenry Co. Salon #483
8 et 40
Mrs. Lauretta Homo, Sec.
5411 W. Orchardway
McHenry, Ill. 60050

McHenry Woman's Club
Mrs. Helen Crouch - Treas.
911 S. Broadway
McHenry, Ill. 60050

Meyer, Rev. Norman and Family
6623 Main Street
Union, Ill. 60180

Mueller Farms Sod Nursery, Inc.
26 W. 300 Lake Street
Ontarioville, Ill. 60103

Petersen, Mrs. Arthur
13016 Charles Road
Woodstock, Ill. 60098

SCAN - AM
1705 South Route 31
McHenry, Ill.60050

Servisoft Refined Water
711 Amsterdam Street
Woodstock, Ill.60098

Stinespring, Mae
3329 N. Bayview Lane
McHenry, Ill. 60050

St. John's Lutheran Church
6621 Main Street
Union, Ill. 60180

McHenry County Defenders
P.O. Box 603
Crystal Lake, Ill. 60014

Kjellstrom, Mr. & Mrs. E.N.
10008 Main Street
Hebron, Ill. 60034

St. John's Ev. Lutheran
Ladies Aid Society
6621 South Main Street
Union, Ill. 60180

American Legion Auxiliary
Unit No. 673
Huntley, Ill. 60142

William Chandler Peterson Unit #171
American Legion Auxiliary
406 Woodstock Street
Crystal Lake, Ill. 60014

BREEDERS' AND FARMERS' DIRECTORIES.

In the Autumnal Tracer, we asked for any copies of these books that anyone would care to donate. We had absolutely no answers. The only one the Museum has is a 1917 copy with eight or ten pages missing. President Dorothy McEachren wrote to Prairie Farmer who replied that there must be copies of this book - it was published for ten years or more - In McHenry and the surrounding counties. The only suggestion they could give us was to keep advertising in this area since they have none of them left and they are out of print. So accept this as another advertisement.

And a Thank You for a Very Successful Help Wanted.

Mrs. Frank Horn (Roberta) of Harvard, asked for a copy of the very first Tracer to complete her otherwise perfect file. This was sent to her and she is most grateful.

Perhaps this would be a good place to list our present most pressing - or at least, desired - needs.

MUSEUM'S CURRENT HELP NEEDED.

1. The Society has not received details of all the different town's first telephone exchanges.
2. An old wall telephone is much desired - the kind with a crank on the right side which was turned to call the operator.
3. This is a long time want - but wouldn't it look nice in the Music Room? A player piano, we mean. And, of course, rolls. If you want to get rid of rolls, they will be accepted in the hope of getting the piano later!
4. More 1885 histories.
5. Business cards, current and contemporary as well as old.
6. Present day clothing - men's and boys'; women's and girls'; baby's shoes and clothing.
7. A moustache curler.
8. We have been given sheet music "dedicated to C. Clare Moore - my nephew, Woodstock, Illinois". It

was composed by Mrs. Retta Darrin who published it in Chicago in 1910. We have been unable to find out who Clare Moore was. Someone thought he worked in a bank. Can anyone give us any information?

9. The Society also needs any information that could be forthcoming about stage coach stops in the county, particularly the Kennedy Way Station between Harvard and Woodstock; and the Chemung stage coach stops - there were two.

NOW - ABOUT THE SOCIETY AND ITS MEMBERS.

In the Fall, Richard Crabb of the Elgin Courier - News spent much time in the northern end of McHenry County, where, with the help of President Dorothy McEachren and members of the board, he gathered history and pictures of this part of the county. A separate section of the Courier-News carried some of this information on Sunday, November 14. The first page was devoted to Harley Wayne, emigrant from New York, school teacher in Marengo, storekeeper in Franklinville, postmaster in Belden, finally settling in Union where he owned the general store, ran a farm, bought and sold land, and loaned money. He was defeated when he ran for the General Assembly but was offered the office of Clerk of the Legislature and went to Springfield. With the coming of the Civil War, at age 39, he enlisted in the Union Army and was killed at the Battle of Shiloh in April, 1862.

There are pictures of his beautiful home (now well kept by owners, the Leo Parentis of Union) and copies of some of his letters (some of which are in the archives of the McHenry County Historical Museum).

Also in this section of the paper, are pictures of the gravestone in the Big Foot Cemetery of the Evans children, five of whom died in less than a year; the Smith farm, established in 1844, now occupied by great grandchildren, the Ralph Lacys; the Hutchinson House, built in 1838-9; St. Paul's Lutheran church dedicated as a Congregational church in 1867; the homes connected with President Ford; the American Legion Hall, home of Harvard's first permanent movie and a former bicycle factory; and the Ladd and Beardsley homes, both more than a century old and the latter always occupied by the same family. All these in Harvard.

Although the final page of the newspaper section is filled with pictures of the society's members showing exhibits at the Museum, many will find the portrait of Fred Hatch of Spring Grove more interesting. This gentleman built and used the first-in-the-world upright silo. The foundations still stand on the farm.

Other pictures are of the grave of Maj. James Watson who served under Generals George Washington and Lafayette in the Revolution, in the Linn-Hebron cemetery; the Cotting house in Richmond; the Solon Mills post office for a century; the Riverside Hotel, the Kenneth Peterson home, the Owen Homestead, all in McHenry; the Old Mill restaurant at the site of the Old Mill which inspired Bennett's "Down by the Old Mill Stream" at Wonder Lake; the Court House and the Opera House at Woodstock; the Presbyterian church at Ridgefield; Colby Motors which claims to be the oldest car dealership in America, the Walkup house and the Wallace and Stickney houses, all in Crystal Lake; the Cupola House in Marengo, the Graf home in Cary and Battendorf Castle in Fox River Grove.

Copies of the paper may be seen at the museum.

MENTIONS NOT PREVIOUSLY MADE

Buckley Cleaners donated the cleaning of the Museum's flags. We take this opportunity to thank them.

Margaret Stone of Woodstock won the stole donated by Mrs. Romona Martin of Cary. We offer thanks to Mrs. Martin and congratulations to Mrs. Stone - belatedly.

Loren Thompson of Woodstock again donated a lovely wreath for the holiday season and it decorated the Museum doors where it was enjoyed by many. Mr. Thompson does this in memory of his mother, Cora B. Carr. We wish to thank him.

Mr. & Mrs. Frederick D. Miles of Crystal Lake presented a check for $500 to be used by the Society. Estimates on repairs for several musical instruments will be obtained and if one can be restored for that amount it will be marked with their name. Meanwhile, they have our gratitude.

The board would also like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Streit, Museum custodians for the lovely snack tray they served at the November meeting. It was delicious and a lovely way to start the holiday season.

OUR TRAVELERS

H. Sanborn Walkup (Sandy) left our cold area for a sojourn at Key West, Florida.

The Misses Clark have gone to Arizona in the hope that warmer weather will improve Leta's health. A persistent cold refused to leave her.

President Dorothy McEachren left for Florida on January 6th, intending to remain about four weeks. Her trip was also made at the doctor's suggestion.

OUR VISITORS

The suggestion has been made by Board Member Pat Williams that certain days be set aside as area days - Huntley Day, Harvard Day and so on. Some work will need be done ahead of time so that guides can tell people where special items from their localities may be seen, Along this line, Alden has already had an Alden Day. Most localities seem to think they prefer to wait until spring.

Among the people who took advantage of the Museum being open in the Fall were several car loads from the Harvard Nursing Home, a group of Campfire girls another day and Conservation Groups.

A young couple from France visited one day and were fortunate to find the Misses Baily on duty as docents. Miss Alice Baily could answer their questions, and Miss Frances said she could understand them. For most of us, our school days French has had too little exercise to be of much help to such visitors.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Tracer committee wishes to thank Nancy Fike, Leta and Alice Clark for the following interesting paragraphs. We do solicit similar information on things of interest to the Society's members for future issues.

THE OLD McHENRY BRIDGE

Though 1976 marked our nations's Bicentennial, local historical landmarks fared poorly. In McHenry alone, two landmarks out of seven listed in a preliminary landmarks survey of McHenry County conducted by the Illinois Department of Conservation in 1974 were destroyed. The first, the Hanly House located on the Crystal Lake Blacktop, was lost to vandals, while the second, the Old McHenry Bridge, was brought down just as deliberately by city, county, and township officials. For McHenry area residents and those who remember the old bridge, its removal was a major public issue throughout 1976.

Early last March, the McHenry County Historical Society Board of Directors passed a unaminous resolution urging the city council of McHenry to preserve the historic 1880 iron truss bridge. Petitions signed by local residents totaling over 1700 signatures in support of the bridge were also presented to the McHenry City Council. Hundreds of school children also sent in petitions to save the bridge. Yet despite this - and the urgings of the McHenry Plaindealer editor, the McHenry County Defenders, the McHenry County Bicentennial Commission, and the Daughters of the American Revolution to preserve the bridge, officials moved ahead swiftly to have it taken down.

Even the fact that under Historical Society sponsorship the old bridge had been unaminously recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, the highest honor a landmark may receive, proved futile in this case. Ironically, had officials waited a few short months until January before removing the bridge,an Illinois law taking effect in January probably would have prevented the action.

It was difficult to witness such total disregard of our heritage and history, but it will prove even harder if citizens and organizations in other communities face a similiar situation but don't profit from what happened to the Old McHenry Bridge and prevent recurences like that. It's time we find out exactly how our local officials feel about historic preservation and what references, if any, our communities have to the preservation of our past. Perhaps then we in the Midwest will learn what people on the East Coast recognized long ago - heritage is something to be proud of. Our local history can and should find a place in our future.

Nancy Fike

HOW DID OSTEND GET ITS NAME?

Lying a few miles west of McHenry, there is a community known as Ostend. Starting roughly at Valley View School, it extends along Route 120 to a line somewhere between the Gordon Clark and Clayton Anderson Farms. Today, the only reminder of this early community's existence is the name "Ostend Acres" on the barn on the farm located at the Ridge Road intersection and the small cemetery which bears its name.

Yet, this was once a thriving community. Ostend was a stop on a stagecoach route which ran from Waukegan to Union. For a time, it had its own post office. According to the General Services Administration, the national Archives at Washington, D.C., Ostend was established as a post office in 1846 and discontinued in 1878 during which period there were seven postmasters: Lyman Burr-1846, Horatio Willis-1849, William Hoege-1852, George Abbott-1858, Andrew Thomas-1867, Wilbur Bassett-1872, and Harvey Tanner-1873.

The Ostend School, a one-room brick building just west of the Wonder Lake-Ridge Road intersection, was the hub of the community with social gatherings, Sunday School classes, basket socials, etc. being held there. At the west end of the district there was the Abbott-Thompson dairy known as the Ostend Creamery. A column of news items from Ostend written by Mrs. Delia Hobart appeared regularly in the McHenry Plaindealer for many years. The name "Ostend" seemed to drop out of existence with the consolidation of rural schools and the closing of the Ostend School.

How did Ostend get its name? No one seems to know. Someone has suggested that it is a shortened form of "Eastend" - if so, east end of what? Can any of our members solve this puzzle?

OUR MUSEUM, AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

On October 20, the Environmental Education Coordinators from the various school districts in McHenry County met at the Museum. This was the first visit for most of these teachers who are excused from their classrooms on a regular basis to meet with Kenneth Fiske of the McHenry County Conservation Dist., Dave Elder who is the Environmental Education Consultant, and others to exchange ideas and to learn about new legislation and nature-related projects to carry back to their respective schools. Many expressed surprise that our Museum had so much to offer educationally. The coordinators were invited to have their schools make use of the Museum as a resource for educational field trips.

This invitation was repeated in the next issue of the Eco-Echo, the conservation newsletter which goes out to the schools. As a result, schools are making arrangements for tours. Twenty-six Sixth Grade students from Hawthorne School visited on Dec. 8th. On Jan. 12th, a group of Eighth Grade pupils from Hawthorne came in the morning, followed on the same day by fifty Fourth Grade children from Canterbury School at Crystal Lake. Other schools are expressing interest and planning future trips.

Mr. Dave Elder attended the November meeting of the Board Meeting of the McHenry County Historical Society and asked the members to cooperate with him in the preparation of study materials on different grade levels so that class groups would have some information about the Museum prior to their visit and, perhaps, study guides to complete during or following their visit. Board members who volunteered to work with Mr. Elder are: Nancy Fike, Sandy Walkup, Gwen Danner, June Whipple, Dorothy Northrop and Alice Bailey.

WHO-IS-IT-IDENTIFIED

Mr. George Whipple identified the pictured "Who-is-it?" in the last issue of the Tracer as Walter Jensen, a butter maker from Denmark at the Dunham creamery many, many years ago. Mr. Whipple recalls that before Walter had the motorcycle his method of transportation was a horse and buggy.

APOLOGIES

Sincere apologies are due Lavern Whiting who has been a good and loyal member of the board of directors for many years, whose name was left off the program for the Grand Opening. This apology is now publicly tendered.

The Tracer committee apologizes for our incorrect numbering of the Fall Tracer. It should have read Volume III, No. I. Our thanks to Ruth Cripe for calling it to our attention. This issue is marked Volume III, No. 2, so perhaps those who file them could correct the numbering, as Mrs. Cripe has done with her own and the Museum's copies.

ODDS'N'ENDS

The first straw hats were made in 1821 from American straws.

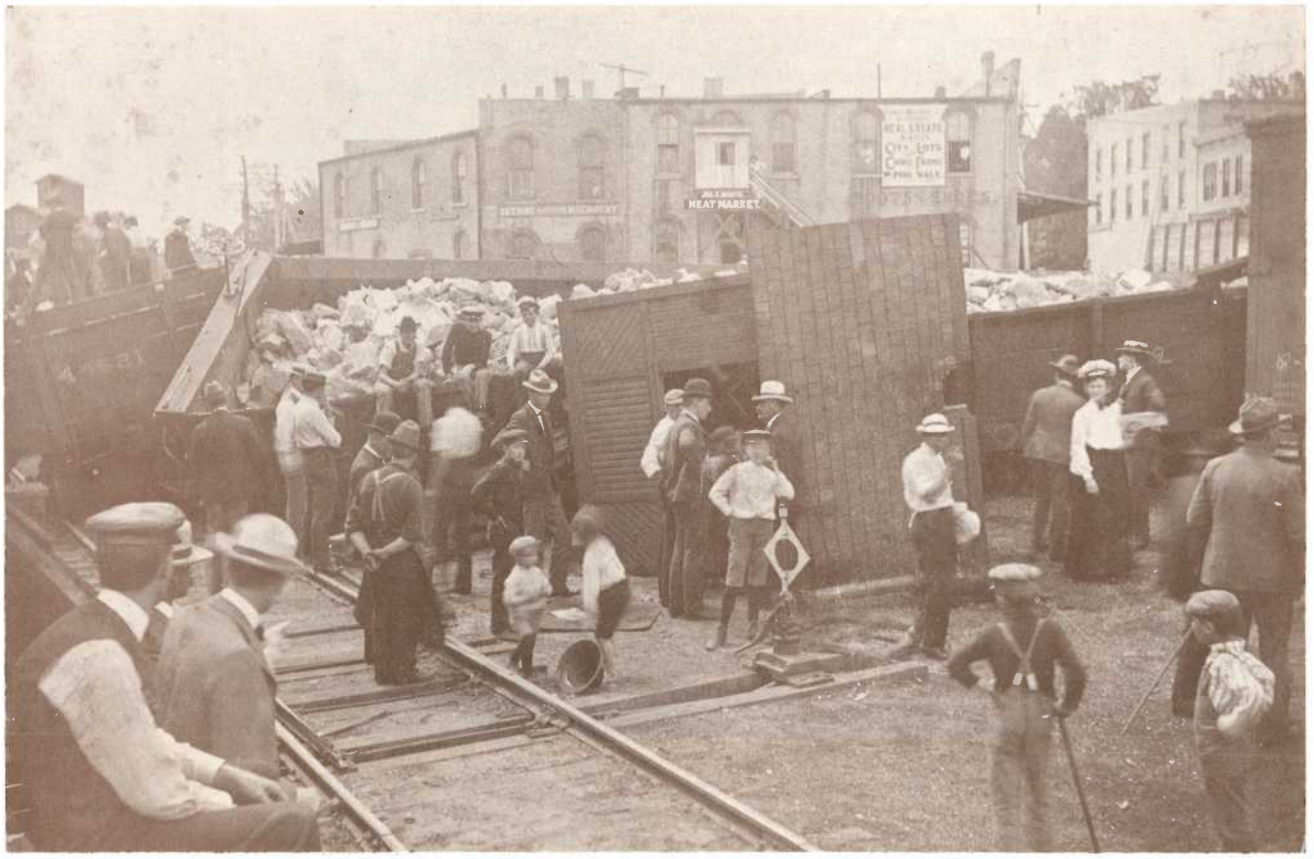
The first public advertising of ice cream anywhere in the world was paid for by Phillip Lenzi, a confectioner. In the May 12th, 1777 New York Gazette, he announced his ice cream could be had "almost every day".

George Conn, farmer in Hebron Township in McHenry County was the first man in that township to have a milk can made, the work being done in Richmond.

Pins were first made by machinery in 1824.

George Washington was an avid ice cream fancier. It is known that Mrs. Alexander Hamilton served it to him at a dinner party in 1789. An inventory at Mount Vernon listed two pewter "ice cream pots". And the records of a merchant on Chatham street in New York shows the president - for so he was at that time - rang up a bill of 51 pounds 6 shillings and 2 pence (about $200, no small sum in those day) for ice cream during the summer of 1790..

WHAT CLASS? SCHOOL? WHERE? WHEN? 67-7-288



WHERE WAS THIS TAKEN?

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